Department of Toxic Substances Control

Preventing environmental damage from hazardous waste, and restoring contaminated sites for all Californians.

State of California

California Environmental Protection Agency

Fact Sheet, December 2005

Cleanup Proposal for Contaminated Soil at Riverside Agricultural Park, Riverside

We invite you to review and comment on a plan to remove contaminated soil from the former Riverside Agricultural Park. The 62-acre property, which is currently vacant land, is planned for residential development. Soil over much of the site is contaminated with chemicals called PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). The goal of the cleanup is to make the land safe for residential use.

Our agency is the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Our role is to protect public health and the environment by overseeing the PCB cleanup.

The City and County of Riverside were in charge of the site investigation, which began in July 2003. The City sent out a fact sheet and community letters, and held two community meetings in April and November 2004 to discuss the findings from their investigation. Because of the large scope of the PCB removal, our agency was asked in March 2005 to oversee the cleanup.

The proposed cleanup is described in a document called a Draft Response Plan. The Draft Response Plan is available for public comment from December 22, 2005 through January 31, 2006 and is available at the locations listed on page 3.

The former Agricultural Park is bordered by Crest Avenue, Rutland Avenue, and the Santa Ana River. There are homes on three sides of the property.

COMMENT PERIOD

December 22, 2005 through January 31, 2006

Written comments must be postmarked or emailed by January 31, 2006, and sent to Maryam Tasnif-Abbasi, DTSC Project Manager, 5796 Corporate Ave., Cypress, CA 90630; email: MTasnif@dtsc.ca.gov

PUBLIC MEETING

January 25, 2006

6:30-7:30 p.m. – Open House
7:30 p.m. – Meeting
Arlanza Elementary School
5891 Rutland Ave.

The open house and public meeting are your opportunity to learn more about the proposed cleanup, and to submit written and oral comments.

The current property owner is the City of Riverside. They have entered into an Exchange, Disposition and Development Agreement, which allows for the transfer of the site to Friends of the Riverside Airport, LLC (FRA). FRA will pay for the cleanup, which will be conducted with our agency's oversight. The future residential development will include 167 single family lots with a minimum 7,000 square foot size, open space, and the extension of Jurupa Avenue through the site.

PCBs from former sewage treatment plant found in soil at the site

PCBs, a group of chemicals used in electrical transformers and heat-transfer fluids, were found in soil samples collected at the site. They can cause cancer and other health problems if people are exposed to them at high levels over a long period of time. PCBs tend to stick tightly to dirt and do not vaporize into the air.

It appears the PCBs came from a sewage treatment plant that operated at the site from 1942 until 1965. The City has owned the site since 1962. In 2003 FRA was demolishing the sewage plant when oily sludge spilled from a structure called a digester. The City cleaned up the spill and then tested the soil around the spill area. This testing showed the presence of PCBs, which led to the collection of more samples across the entire site. This expanded investigation was called a Remedial Investigation.

No health risk to current residents. Health experts studied the sampling results and found that the PCBs did not pose a risk to people living near the site. However, if they are not removed they could pose a risk to future residents living in homes built on the site.

Remedial Investigation included soil and groundwater sampling

In 2003 and 2004, the City did a Remedial Investigation to find out what chemicals were at the site, their extent, and their concentrations. The County oversaw this investigation. In addition to PCBs they looked for petroleum hydrocarbons (chemicals from gasoline, diesel, and oil), pesticides, herbicides, perchlorate, metals such as lead and arsenic, dioxins, furans, and other chemicals. The investigation included the following:

- over 600 soil samples taken at 380 locations across the site
- soil sampled from the surface down to 11 feet
- groundwater testing results from four wells on site
- soil samples taken on residential properties near the site

In August 2005, FRA tested more soil and installed and sampled more groundwater wells at the site to add to the Remedial Investigation. Our agency oversaw this testing.

The results of the Remedial Investigation and the additional investigation showed:

- PCBs in soil over much of the site. In some places the chemicals were at the surface, though most were a few inches or feet deep. In a few spots the PCBs were deeper than 10 feet.
- PCBs and perchlorate in the water samples from four wells on the site. (These wells are not used for drinking water.)
- low levels of PCBs in 5 of 16 soil samples from nearby residences; however, they are well within levels that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers safe for residential areas.
- small area of metals found, which will be removed along with the PCBs in the same area **Proposed cleanup is soil removal**

FRA has worked with our agency to develop a cleanup plan (the Draft Response Plan) for the property. The Draft Response Plan describes their proposal to remove all soil with PCBs above 0.22 parts per million and dispose of it at an approved off-site facility. The U.S. EPA and DTSC have determined that PCB levels of 0.22 parts per million or less are safe for residential areas. FRA will continue to study the groundwater. More soil testing for a group of chemicals known as dioxins and furans will also take place. The Draft Response Plan may be updated based

on the results of these tests.

Under the proposed cleanup workers would:

- excavate between 160,000 and 200,000 tons of PCB-contaminated soil using heavy equipment such as loaders, excavators, and bulldozers
- keep the excavated soil in lined and covered piles at the site until it can be transported
- take the soil by covered truckloads to an approved offsite disposal facility
- make sure the loaded trucks do not track contaminated soil off site
- take follow-up soil samples to make sure the contaminated soil has been removed
- leave the site safe for residential development.

Truck routes and frequency. Trucks would enter and exit the site at Jurupa Avenue and go east. From Jurupa the loaded trucks would take Doolittle Avenue to Morris Street to Van Buren Boulevard to the 60 freeway. About 10,050 truckloads would be needed to haul away the soil. Truck traffic would be up to 250 trips per day, between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturdays.

Dust control and worker safety. To control dust during excavation and hauling, the contractor doing the cleanup will lightly spray the soil with water. Piles of excavated soil will be covered with plastic sheeting, and truckloads of soil will be covered with tarps. Workers also will monitor the air at the perimeter of the site to make sure it stays at safe levels as defined by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) and approved by DTSC. Workers will wear masks and protective clothing since they will be in close contact with the soil.

The excavation, removal, and follow-up sampling are estimated to take 2 to 4 months.

Environmental impact of the cleanup

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City of Riverside is evaluating whether the proposed cleanup actions (the digging, hauling, etc.) may harm human health or the environment. For example, they will look at the possible impact of dust, traffic, noise, and disturbance of habitat. If their study finds that there could be potential harm from any of the proposed actions, those actions would be modified in the final cleanup plan. The City will publish their findings in a document that will be offered for public review and comment.

Where to find the Draft Response Plan

The Draft Response Plan is at the Riverside Planning Department at 3900 Main Street, 3rd Floor, (951) 826-5624, the La Sierra Branch Library at 4600 La Sierra Avenue, (951) 688-7740 and at our office at 5796 Corporate Ave. in Cypress. Call Julie Johnson, File Room Coordinator, at (714) 484-5337.

Who to call at our agency

If you have questions about the proposed cleanup, please contact either of these people at the Department of Toxic Substances Control:

Maryam Tasnif-Abbasi
Project Manager
(714) 484-5489
email: MTasnif@dtsc.ca.gov

Kim Foreman
Public Participation Specialist
(714) 484-5324
email: KForeman@dtsc.ca.gov

Media Inquiries

Jeanne Garcia
(818) 551-2176
email: JGarcia1@dtsc.ca.gov

Notice to the Hearing Impaired

You can obtain additional information by using the California State Relay Service at 1-888-877-5378 (TDD). Ask them to contact Kim Foreman at (714) 484-5324.

Meeting Accessibility

For information on accessibility and to request reasonable accommodations for the public meeting, please call Kim Foreman at least one week in advance of the meeting.

Ms. Maryam Tasnif-Abbasi
Department of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630

INSIDE: Cleanup proposal for contaminated soil at Riverside Agricultural Park

PÁGINAS INTERIORES: Propuesta de limpieza del suelo contaminado el Parque Agrícola De Riverside